



State of Louisiana

Division of Administration
Office of the Commissioner

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Plans in Place to Ensure Community Safety Before, During and After Pallas Hotel on Sunday

NEW ORLEANS – To make way for the University Medical Center in downtown New Orleans, the State of Louisiana will implode the former Pallas Hotel building, located at the corner of Claiborne Avenue and Canal Streets, on the morning of Sunday, July 22, around 8 a.m. The actual time of implosion may change slightly depending on conditions on that day.

The City of New Orleans will execute a mandatory evacuation for several blocks around the site. The State is providing housing for those residents who do not have somewhere else to stay beginning on Saturday evening. Officials plan to close Interstate 10 in both directions between the Orleans Avenue Exit and the Pontchartrain Expressway beginning at 7 a.m.

Once the area is clear of pedestrians, residents and traffic and then secured, the state's demolition contractor will begin final preparations for the implosion. Following the eight-to-nine second implosion, the state's demolition contractor and Louisiana State Police will check the area to ensure that it is safe.

The Louisiana State Police will then clear Department of Transportation and Development engineers to inspect the I-10 overpass to ensure that it is structurally sound and safe for drivers. Following this inspection, debris will be removed from the overpass if necessary and it will be reopened.

Officials will reopen streets to traffic and residents as they are inspected and cleared of debris. Most streets and areas should be reopened within several hours of the implosion.

HOTLINE

The state has established a hotline for residents with questions or concerns about the implosion. It can be accessed this weekend on Saturday, July 21 from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. and Sunday, July 22 from 5 a.m. to 5 p.m. by calling (855) 592-8146.

MANDATORY EVACUATION

The city of New Orleans will execute a mandatory resident evacuation of several blocks around the site, which should be completed by 7 p.m. on Saturday, July 21, and affected businesses at 2 a.m. on Sunday, July 22. By 4 a.m. the streets in the secured area, which is bounded north and south from Bienville Street to Tulane Avenue and east and west from S. Villere Street to Johnson Street, will be closed to all pedestrian and vehicle traffic.

Beginning at 4 a.m., the New Orleans Fire Department, with the assistance of the New Orleans Police Department, Emergency Medical Services and the state, will initiate a structure-to-structure search in the area that is evacuated to verify the dwellings are uninhabited. It is anticipated that the searches will be concluded by 7 a.m.

The evacuation is mandatory. People who refuse to leave will be escorted out of the area by the New Orleans Police Department. The state is providing housing overnight for all affected residents and their pets if they do not have another place to stay.

VOLUNTARY RELOCATION

Out of an abundance of caution, the state is working with the Housing Authority of New Orleans to move residents with respiratory issues out of the Iberville Housing Development temporarily on the morning of the implosion. Residents in the Iberville Housing Development are not required to evacuate, as they live several hundred feet outside of the mandatory evacuation zone.

The state will provide bus service on the morning of the implosion for Iberville residents and others in the area with respiratory problems who wish to leave the area during the implosion. Buses will pick residents up between 5 a.m. and 6:30 a.m. both at the corner of Canal and Galvez and Iberville and Marais Streets.

Residents will be transported away from the area, where they will be provided a light breakfast. Residents who require medication or who have special dietary needs should bring these items with them. Residents will return to the area via bus after the dust has settled and when streets are re-opened.

NEARBY CITIZENS

Residents with respiratory problems and others who do not wish to leave the area should close their doors and windows and turn off fans and air conditioning units from around 7:45 a.m. to about 30 minutes after the implosion, around 8:30 p.m.

After the implosion, the dust is expected to settle within 10 to 20 minutes. Most of the heavy dust will be between 150 and 175 feet from the base of the hotel, which is about a half block from the

hotel. A mandatory evacuation has been called for residents within 600 feet of the hotel site and the state is providing temporary housing for these residents overnight, if they require it.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION CLOSURE

All RTA bus lines that use the temporary transfer zone at Canal Street and N. Villere Street and at N. Robertson Street will be detoured until public officials allow traffic to use Canal Street and the I-10. Service is subject to delays. Lines 15 – Ferret, 16 – S. Claiborne and 91 – Jackson– Esplanade will continue to operate regularly scheduled service.

Buses will replace the Canal streetcars all day on Sunday, July 22. To detour to and from Canal Street north of Claiborne Avenue/I-10, shuttle buses will travel on N. Galvez Street to Orleans Avenue, to Basin Street to Canal Street and use same detour from Canal Street to N. Galvez Street.

Other detours include:

- 28 – M. L. King: To Canal Street, buses use O’Keefe Ave. to Canal St. From Canal Street: buses turn on Baronne St. to regular route.
- 39 – Tulane: To Canal Street, buses use Tulane Ave. then turn on S. Galvez St. to Poydras St. to O’Keefe Ave. then turn on Canal St. to Basin St. From Canal Street: Basin St. to Conti St. to Rampart St. to Poydras St. to S. Galvez St. to Tulane Ave and back to regular route.
- 51/52 – St. Bernard, 62 – Morrison Express and 64 – Lake Forest: To Canal Street, regular routes to Basin St. From Canal Street: U-turn on Basin Street at Iberville St. to Orleans Ave. to N. Claiborne and back to regular route.
- 57 – Franklin and 88 – St. Claude: To Canal Street: buses travel on N. Rampart St. to Canal St. and from Canal Street return on Basin St. to Conti St. and back on regular route on N. Rampart St.
- 84 – Galvez: To Canal Street: N. Galvez St. to Orleans Ave. to Basin St. to Canal St. From Canal Street: To S. Rampart St. to Poydras Ave. to regular route.
- Algiers Lines: To Canal Street: O’Keefe Ave. to Canal St. to Basin St. From Canal Street: Basin St. to Conti St. to S. Rampart St. to Calliope St. to the Westbank Expressway.

For more information, contact the RTA Rideline at 504-248-3900 or visit www.norta.com.

STREET CLOSURES

A section of Interstate 10 will be closed before the implosion and will reopen after any dust is removed from the road and the structure has been inspected by the Department of Transportation and Development. The closure is expected to last several hours.

A complete closure of I-10 both east and west bound will be implemented by DOTD personnel and state and local law enforcement. DOTD’s Regional Traffic Management Center (RTMC) will maintain video surveillance of the area, monitor the traffic control plan’s implementation,

report any safety or congestion concerns and can remotely manage any plan adjustment that may be needed.

Motorist Assistance Patrol (MAP) units will monitor congestion in areas without camera coverage and report problems to the RTMC. RTMC will post directional and closure messages on the Variable Message Signs, give status updates via e-mail and Twitter and communicate with police agencies regarding problems and progress of the closures.

Streets will be reopened to traffic as dust is removed from the area, which is expected to take several hours. Cleaning up debris around the Pallas Hotel site will begin following the implosion. Removing the remnants of the imploded hotel from the UMC site will take several months.

ABOUT THE IMPLOSION

The implosion of the Pallas Hotel will be executed and monitored by Controlled Demolition, Inc. (CDI) and Contaminant Control, Inc. (CCI). CDI has been conducting demolition work internationally since the 1940s and has demolished thousands of structures through the controlled use of explosives. CCI has been in business since 1989 offering Environmental Service, Remediation, Demolition, and Emergency Services.

The Pallas Hotel implosion is expected to last no more than eight or nine seconds. Following the blast a cloud of dust will emerge from around the building site. The dust will be heaviest in the area immediately surrounding the former hotel.

Generally, heavy dust will only travel between 150 to 175 feet from the site of the implosion, with lighter dust settling as far as five or six blocks away, based on the prevailing winds on the morning of the implosion. The dust cloud is expected to dissipate within 10 minutes. The dust is not toxic, but people with allergies or respiratory problems should avoid the area near the implosion site for a few hours.

The Department of Environmental Quality inspected the site of the hotel and deemed it to be free of toxic materials, granting approval for the implosion last week. Air quality and vibration monitoring will be conducted before, during, and after the implosion. Inspection of I-10 and clean-up of the area will begin immediately following the implosion. Shutdown duration is subject to clean-up and inspection results on the day of the event.

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